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## "Can Ye Not Discern the Signs of the Times?"

When the war now waging in Europe began, there were often heard such expressions as, "There will be no war," "The conflict will not last more than two or three weeks," and the like. Many believed this to be so, as they had not given any serious attention to the subject. They were, therefore, greatly shocked when suddenly the sword was drawn and rivers of blood began to flow. But it required only feeble eyes to see that the great war was "at the doors." Some of us had realized for years that the catastrophe could not long be avoided. All the great powers of Europe were nervously increasing their armies, perfecting their fortifications, drilling their troops, enlarging their bursting war budgets, adding battleship to battleship, indeed were doing everything possible, on land and sea and air, to make it absolutely certain

that a great conflict was near. The wonder was, not that the war broke this summer upon Europe, but that it did not begin years before. Whoever may or may not have fired the first gun, or have caused it to be fired, the real cause of the conflict was the piled-up armaments and war materials of Europe, which had been accumulating for forty years, and the suspicions, jealousies, falsehoods, and ambitions which attended and vitalized them. Any attempt to explain the real cause of the war, or to discover how it may be ended and permanent peace in Europe be finally secured, will be useless if this source is ignored.

Furthermore, when the war broke out and all the great European powers became involved in the mad struggle, over and over again was it declared, and is still being declared, by ordinarily intelligent men, that this will be the last great war. This prophecy, which does credit to every humane man, we may all hope will be fulfilled. But how? Not if the present system of armaments and the national and racial antagonisms and ambitions underlying them shall continue. If the present utterly immoral and unspeakably horrible conflict shall even be quickly ended and peace again secured, it will not be many years, if this irrational system of armaments continues, until new armies and navies will be created, and submarines and aircraft constructed, such as can scarcely even be conceived of at the present time. There will not, there cannot, be any last great war under this system. War can never destroy itself. No delusion was ever greater than that implements of war, however multiplied and destructive they may be, are guarantees of peace and safety. This is the supreme lesson of the world-war now devouring Europe and mocking civilization. The great European war may easily be made the last one if men are only disposed to make it so. That is the only possible way, and it does seem that, after so many centuries of egregious blunder and failure in the way of slaughter and desolation, the common-sense method of brotherliness, trust, and law among nations might at once be adequately tried.

The cause of peace has gained enormously during recent years, in spite of the fact that the last forty infernal days have apparently given the final lie to its pretensions. But a much greater gain is to be registered soon, as the method of armaments has finally completely broken down. Armaments have been the chief obstacle in the way of the advancement of settled peace and order, and both the peoples and the governments will hasten, one is inclined to believe, after this frightful lesson, to make it impossible again for such a catastrophe to scourge humanity.